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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a classroom management technique designed to bring an ordered routine and smooth beginning to each public speaking class. A student-read announcement or article is used to start the class. The paper explains the goals and gives directions for use of this technique. An introductory lesson which covers the fundamentals of presenting an announcement, such as previewing the material, gaining audience attention, and speaking effectively, is presented. This class opener can be easily adapted to all academic disciplines to promote, among other things, recall, participation, classmate recognition, leadership initiative, and oral communication skills. (CR)

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STUDENT STARTERS

Using a Student-read Announcement or Article as a Classroom Management Strategy

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I use a brief involvement exercise to focus student attention at the very beginning of the class period. I provide the appropriate copy, and a **student** actually **starts** the class by reading an announcement or article aloud. This effective classroom management technique brings an ordered routine and smooth beginning to each class meeting. Let's look more closely at this deceptively simple strategy: the procedure employed, the many advantages realized, the materials utilized, and the variations possible.

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HOW? METHODS

In my public speaking classes, I strive for ways to increase student participation. **Students Starters** uses an effective method which involves all students in the class during the term. Early in the quarter, I teach a brief introductory lesson which covers the fundamentals of presenting an announcement, i.e., previewing the material, gaining audience attention, standing confidently, and speaking effectively. The instructor selects appropriate copy such as a timely campus announcement or a short selection from an article or professional publication beforehand. When the designated student arrives, he or she is given the material and has a few minutes to prepare it.

The procedure is simple. I greet the class briefly and then introduce the designated speaker by name. The students walks to the front of the room and starts the class by reading the announcement or article. Afterwards, I thank the student and lead the applause. The reading can be reinforced by instructor comment and/or class discussion, or it can simply be followed by the instruction planned for that day.

WHY? ADVANTAGES

This high interest class opener can be easily adapted to all academic disciplines. The **Student Starters** strategy offers many advantages to both the instructor and the students. This technique

promotes recall, participation, classmate recognition, leadership initiative, oral communication skills, an awareness of current campus activities, interest in current topics, and practical applications within this discipline. It encourages drawing relationships between the text and the real world. In addition, this activity can serve as a routine vehicle for other benefits: to learn student names, to begin class smoothly, to establish class esprit, and to encourage student involvement.

WHAT? MATERIALS/VARIATIONS

The college classroom easily lends itself to different applications of this versatile technique: any appropriate subject matter may be used. Student announcements may promote campus activities or publicize community cultural events. I use information from club notices, flyers, Student Government Association posters, and our campus newspaper. Current publications and local newspapers also may be productive sources of pertinent material.

The announcement or brief article can be appropriate to the area of your academic specialty as well. Selected sections of professional journal articles may be highlighted to share discipline-specific news with the class. A specific reading can be selected because it pertains to the topic for the day. In this case, it may serve as an appropriate jumpstart for class discussion on a particular issue. For is reason, I have compiled a collection of discipline-appropriate

materials to use on a regular basis which is supplemented by current campus and news articles.

Variations are possible and easy to implement; adaptations invite innovation. Speaking order for **Student Starters** may be alphabetical, volunteer, or group related. Lengthy materials could be distributed earlier to allow for more thorough preparation. Several announcements may be given during one class period in order to include all students as presenters during the term. Students can also be encouraged to bring in their own announcements or current event news. Individual methods of recognizing student contributions could be devised. Students grow to appreciate and anticipate the opportunity to speak to the class and to hear relevant news daily. The brief time allotted to the **Student Starters** concept <u>is</u> well worth the effort!